

MIRIAM'S CUP

Miriam's cup has become part of the Seder ritual only in the last few years, but its origin lies in the *midrash*, which says that Miriam's well accompanied the Israelites throughout the wilderness until Miriam's death. Miriam, the sister of Moses, is thus associated with the ongoing redemption represented by water in the desert. In Miriam's cup, filled with water, we have the parallel of Elijah's cup, which appears toward the end of the Seder. But whereas Elijah stands for the redemption yet to come, Miriam reminds us of redemption occurring daily in our lives.

Before you recite the Kiddush (blessing over the wine), place Miriam's Cup, filled with spring water, on the Seder table. Read the following:

Even as we begin our story, we know its "end." Israel will leave Egypt and wander in the desert for forty years on the way to the promised land. According to legend, a well of water accompanied the Israelites on their journey in the desert.

This miraculous well was provided because of the merit of Miriam, the sister of Moses, who watched over her brother as he floated down the Nile, and later joined with him to lead the people across the sea. Tonight, we recall that well as we place Miriam's cup on our Seder table.

In every generation, we experience both oppression and liberation. In our wanderings, both as a people and as individuals, Miriam's well still accompanies us as a sustaining presence in the desert, enabling us not just to survive, but to thrive.

Miriam's well reminds us that our journey has both direction and destination - to a place where freedom is proclaimed for all. ("A Night of Questions," by Rabbi Joy Levvit and Rabbi Michael Stassfeld.)

MIRIAM'S SONG (by Debbie Friedman)

Chorus: And the women dancing with their timbrels, followed Miriam as she sang her song. Sing a song to the One whom we've exalted.

Miriam was a weaver of unique variety.
The tapestry she wove was one which sang
our history.
With every strand and every thread she
crafted her delight.
A woman touched with spirit, she dances to-
ward the light.
(Chorus)

When Miriam stood upon the shore and gazed
across the sea,
The wonder of this miracle she soon came to
believe.
Whoever thought the sea would part with an

outsretched hand?
And we would march to freedom, to the
promised land.
(Chorus)
Miriam the prophet took the timbral in her
hand,
And all the women followed her, just as she
had planned.
And Miriam raised her voice in song, she sang
with praise and might,
"We just lived through a miracle, we're go-
ing to dance
tonight! (Chorus)